Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅgau Jayataḥ

ŚRĪ HARI-NĀMA MAHĀ-MANTRA

COMPILED BY

Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

GAUḌĪYA VEDĀNTA PUBLICATIONS

Dedicated to

the Founder of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti
and the best amongst the 10th generation of
descendants in the Bhāgavat-Paramparā from
Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu

Śrī Gurupādapadma
Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Ācārya Kesarī
Nitya-līlā Praviṣṭa
Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottaraśata

Śrī Śrīmad
Bhakti Prajñāna
Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

According to eternal *śāstras* such as the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas* and *Saṁhitās*, the transcendental name (*nāma brahma*), *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare* is the *mahā-mantra* (supreme *mantra*) for deliverance in Kali-yuga[1]. The primary occupational duty (*dharma*) of this age is to chant and perform *saṅkīrtana* of this sixteen word *mahā-mantra*.

The name of Bhagavān is directly the form (*svarūpa*) of Bhagavān. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has filled His names with His sweet form, His sweet pastimes and all of His potencies. Bhagavān is the possessor of His name and is called *nāmī*. Although He (*nāmī*) and His name (*nāma*) are nondifferent, in certain circumstances, the mercy of *nāma brahma* exceeds that of *nāmī brahma*. By His causeless mercy Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of *nāma* to deliver the conditioned souls. One who is most fortunate takes *dīkṣā* in the *śrī hari-nāma mahā-mantra* from a bona fide *guru* who himself is constantly absorbed in *śrī hari-nāma*. In this way he worships Śrī Bhagavān by performing congregational chant-

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[1] A *yuga* is defined as being one age within a cycle of four ages, in the life of a universe. They are named Satya, Treta, Dvāpara and Kali. Each age has consecutively less good qualities, longevity, auspiciousness, etc. The final, most degraded age is Kali-yuga (the age of quarrel and hypocrisy), in which we are now living. This age lasts for 432,000 years of which 5,000 have already passed.

ing of His names (*saṅkīrtana*), daily chanting a fixed number of names (*japa*), and remembering Śrī Bhagavān's name (*smaraṇa*). *Śāstra* states that in Kali-yuga it is more glorious to perform *nāma saṅkīrtana* loudly than to perform *nāma smaraṇa* or *japa*.

japato hari-nāmāni sthāna-śat-guṇādhikaḥ
ātmānañca punāty-uccair japan śrotṛn-punāti ca

(Śrī Nāradīya, spoken by Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja)

"A person who chants *śrī hari-nāma* loudly is one hundred times superior to one who chants quietly. The person who chants quietly only benefits and purifies himself, whereas one who chants loudly also benefits and purifies all who hear him, such as animals, insects, birds, trees and creepers. Such entities cannot chant, but they can be delivered from the ocean of birth and death simply by hearing this *hari-nāma*."

Thus, in this age of Kali, the crest-jewel of all kinds of *sādhana* is to perform *saṅkīrtana* of the sixteen word*hari-nāma mahā-mantra*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Pāvana-Avatārī, the most merciful *avatāra* who purifies Kali-yuga. He therefore instructs us to perform *śrī hari-nāma saṅkīrtana—kīrtanīya sadā hari*. (*Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3)

The *Bṛhad Nāradīya Purāṇa* clearly states:

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā

"To make spiritual progress in Kali-yuga there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way than by chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name."

THE SEQUENCE OF THE MAHĀ-MANTRA

One school of thought says that the *mahā-mantra* should be chanted in the following sequence:

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

This understanding is based on the following points:

1) The *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, published by Venkatesh Press, Mumbai, states that this *mahā-mantra* begins with the words *hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare* followed by *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare*.
2) In a book called *Kalyāṇa* from Gorakhpura, the *mahā-mantra* is written in the above mentioned sequence.
3) Śrī Rāma appeared in Tretā-yuga. Later Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in Dvāpara-yuga. It is therefore logical to chant *hare rāma* first and then *hare kṛṣṇa*.

The above mentioned views are both illogical and unfounded:

1) Earlier publications of the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad* by Venkatesh Press, Mumbai, clearly state that the *mahā-mantra* begins with *hare kṛṣṇa* and not with *hare rāma*. These earlier publications are still preserved in libraries in Calcutta and Jaipura.
2) *Kalyāṇa*, published by Gītā Press, Gorakhpura, is not a bona fide proof with which to support the above perspective.

3) That Tretā-yuga is followed by Dvāpara-yuga has no effect on the eternal *mahā-mantra*. The *mahā-mantra* is beyond all *yugas* and time.

This topic can only be understood by chanting the *brahma mahā-mantra*, the deliverer of all *yugas*. Reference to Śrī Bhagavān's names in the different *yugas* can found in the *Ananta-Saṁhitā*:

Satya-yuga:
nārāyaṇa parā vedāh nārāyaṇa parā kṣaraḥ
nārāyaṇa parā muktiḥ nārāyaṇa parā gatiḥ

"Nārāyaṇa is declared the Supreme in all the *Vedas*. Nārāyaṇa is the supreme of all letters. Nārāyaṇa is the supreme liberation. Nārāyaṇa is the supreme path."

Tretā-yuga:
rāma nārāyaṇa-ānanta mukunda madhusūdana
kṛṣṇa keśava kaṁsāre hare vaikuṇṭha vāmana

"*He* Rāma! *He* Nārāyaṇa! *He* Ãnanta! *He* Mukunda! *He* Madhusūdana! *He* Kṛṣṇa! *He* Keśava! *He* Kaṁsāre! *He* Hare! *He* Vaikuṇṭha! *He* Vāmana!"

Dvāpara-yuga:
hare murāre madhu-kaitabāre
gopāla govinda mukunda śaure
yajñeśa nārāyaṇa kṛṣṇa viṣṇo
nirāṣrayaṁ māṁ jagadīśa rakṣa

"Hare, Murāre, Madhu-Kaitabāre, Gopāla, Govinda, Mukunda, Śaure, Lord of all *yajñas* Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu! *He* Jagadīśa, please protect me! I have no other shelter."

Kali-yuga:
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
ṣoḍa-śaitāni nāmāni dvātrinśad varṇa kāni hi
kalau yuge mahā-mantraḥ sammato jīva tāraṇe

"*Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*.This *hari-nāma mahā-mantra* consists of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables. In Kali-yuga this *mantra* can deliver all *jīvas*."

Thus, in regard to the third point, it is evident that the *brahma mahā-mantra* (Kṛṣṇa's name) was present as the deliverer even in Tretā-yuga, before the appearance of Kṛṣṇa in Dvāpara-yuga, with names such as Mukunda, Madhusūdana, Kṛṣṇa, Keśava and Kaṁsāri. Therefore, the advice and arguments given about the reversed sequence of the *mahā-mantra* are invalid.

The *ślokas* of the *Ananta-Saṁhitā* clearly state that in the *Upanṣads*, such as the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, the *mahā-mantra* is written in the following sequence: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*.

Nāradajī received the *mahā-mantra* in this sequence from his *guru*, Brahmājī, and this tradition is still practiced today in the Brahmā Mādhava Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. In other *sampradāyas*, however, this *mahā-mantra* does not descend through the *guru paramparā*, and therefore its secret and sequence are unknown to persons in those *sampradāyas*. It is no wonder that they reverse the sequence of the *mahā-mantra* and begin it with *hare rāma*.

Other bona fide *śāstras* give evidence regarding the form of the *mahā-mantra*:

śiṣya syodaṅ mukha-sthasya harer-nāmāni ṣoḍaśa
saṁśrāvyaiva tato dagdhān mantraṁ trai-lokya-mangalam

(Jñānāmṛta-sāra)

"Śrī Gurudeva should recite the sixteen word *hare kṛṣṇa mantra* to the disciple before initiating him into the *gopāla mantra*, which brings auspiciousness to the three worlds. To receive this *gopāla mantra*, the disciple must sit facing north and receive the *mantra* in his right ear."

In *śāstras* such as the *Brahma Yāmala*, Lord Śiva describes the *svarūpa* (form) of the *mahā-mantra*:

hariṁ binā nāsti kiñcat pāpani-stārakaṁ kalau
tasmāl-lokod-dhārāṇa-ārthaṁ hari-nāma prakāśayet
sarvatra mucyate loko mahā-pāpāt kalau yuge
hare-kṛṣṇa-pada-dvandvaṁ kṛṣṇeti ca pada-dvayam
tathā hare-pada-dvandvaṁ hare-rāma iti dvayam
tad-ante ca mahā-devī rāma rāma dvayaṁ vadet
hare hare tato brūyād harināma samud dharet
mahā-mantraṁ ca kṛṣṇasya sarvapāpa praṇāṣakamiti

"*He* Mahādevī! Look! In Kali-yuga there is no easier way to eradicate sins than by *śrī hari-nāma*. It is therefore essential to propagate *śrī hari-nāma* among the general populous. The people in Kali-yuga can be easily liberated from the greatest hell by performing *saṅkīrtana* of this *mahā-mantra*.To chant the *mahā-mantra*, first chant *hare kṛṣṇa* twice, then chant *kṛṣṇa* twice, then *hare* twice. After that, chant *hare rāma* twice, then *rāma* twice and again *hare* twice. One should chant, articulate and perform *sankīrtana* etc., of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *mahā-mantra*, which destroys all sins." This is described in these two stanzas.

The *Rādhā Tantra* states:

śṛṇu mātarmahāmāye viśva-bīja-svarūpiṇi
hari nāmno mahāmāye kramaṅ vad sureśvari

"A *bhakta* prays, '*He viśva bīja svarūpiṇī* (seed of the whole universe)! Sureśvari (who is worshipable by the demigods)! Mahāmāyā! Māta! Please hear my prayer and explain to me the sequence of the *mahā-mantra*.' "

In response to this, Devī says:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
dvātriṁ śadakṣarāṇyeva kalau nāmāni sarvadam
etanmantraṁ suta śreṣṭha prathamaṁ śṛṇuyānnaraḥ

"O best among sons! The *mahā-mantra* for Kali-yuga bestows all perfection. This *mahā-mantra*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa *nāma*, is composed of six-

teen names and thirty-two syllables: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*. Therefore, a person who desires his own welfare should first hear this *mahā-mantra* from his Gurudeva."

In the same *Rādhā Tantra*, Tripurā Devī also suggests:

hari-nāmnā vinā putra dīkṣā ca vi-phalā bhavet
guru-deva-mukhācchrutā hari-nāma parā kṣaram
brāhmaṇa-ksatra-viṭ-śūdrāḥ ṣrutvā nām parā kṣaram
dīkṣāṁ kuryuḥ suta-śreṣtha mahā-vidhyāsu-sundara

"O best among sons, you are conversant with the greatest *jñāna*. Look! If you hear the *gopāla mantra* from Śrī Gurudeva before hearing the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, the results of the *gopāla mantra* will become void. Therefore, persons of all *varṇas*, such as *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*, first have to hear this *mahā-mantra* from Śrī Gurudeva before they accept initiation into the *gopāla mantra*."

The *Padma Purāṇa* also states:

dvāntriṁ-sad-akṣaraṁ mantraṁ nāma-ṣoḍa-śakānvitam
prajapan vaiṣṇavo nityaṁ rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sthalaṁ-labhet

"Any Vaiṣṇava who constantly chants the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, which is endowed with sixteen names consisting of thirty-two syllables, will certainly attain the abode of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛṇdāvana Dhāma."

In the *Rādhā Hṛdya Khaṇḍa* of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, Romaharṣaṇa Sūta prays to Śrī Veda Vyāsa as follows:

yattvayā kīrtitaṁ nātha hari-nāmeti sanjitam
mantraṁ brahma-padaṁ siddhi karaṁ-tad-vad-no-vibho

"*He* Vibho! *He* Prabhu! Please instruct me in the *brahma svarūpa nāma mantra* of Śrī Hari which is the bestower of all perfections."

In reply, Śrī Veda Vyāsa gives the following instruction:

gṛhaṇād yasya mantrasya dehī brahma-mayo bhavet
sadhyaḥ pūtaḥ surāpo 'pi sarva-siddhi-yuto bha

vet tad-ahaṁ te bhidhā-syāmi mahā-bhāgavato hamsi
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
iti ṣoḍaśakaṁ nāmnāṁ tri-kāla kalmaṣāp-aham
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva vedeṣu vidhyate

"O my son, I will certainly instruct you in that *mahā-mantra,* the acceptance of which a person in the bodily conception of life can be liberated and even a drunkard can quickly become purified and attain all perfection. I will instruct you because you are a *mahā-bhāgavata* and a suitable candidate. Just see! The sixteen word *mahā-mantra, hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare,* can destroy the sins of the three worlds. The four *Vedas* do not mention a method for achieving liberation from material bondage superior to the chanting of this *mahā-mantra.*"

Ananta Saṁhitā also states:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
soḍasautāni nāmāni dvātriṁ-śad varṇa-kāṇi hi
kalāu yuge mahā-mantraḥ sammato jīva-tāraṇe
utsṛa-jyaitan-mahā-mantraṁ ye tvanyat kalpitaṁ padam
mahā-nāmeti gāyanti te śāstra-guru-laṅi-ghanaḥ

"All *śāstras* agree that the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra,* which is composed of sixteen names and thirty-two syllables, is the illustrious *mantra* to deliver the *jīvas* in Kali-yuga. Those who neglect this *mahā-mantra* and accept any other process, due to their own imagination or the imagination of others, are actually disobeying *guru* and *śāstra*. If someone asks, 'Why is this sixteen word *hare kṛṣṇa mantra* the *mahā-mantra*?' then the following answer is given. 'Among all of Kṛṣṇa's names, no name other than Hari can easily take away sins, great misfortune and ignorance. No name other than Kṛṣṇa can deliver *prema.* And no name other than Rāma can bestow liberation.' This is why the *mahā-mantra* is composed of

these three primary names. Secondly, these sixteen names are an invocation. *Oṁ*, *namaḥ*, *klīṁ*, *svāhā*, etc., are not required to make the *mantra* more potent. For this reason it is called the *mahā-mantra*."

The *Sanat Kumāra Saṁhitā* states:

hare kṛṣṇau dvirā-vṛttau kṛṣṇa tāḍrak tathā hare
hare rāma tathā rāma tathā tāḍrak hare punaḥ
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

This means first chant *hare kṛṣṇa* twice, then *kṛṣṇa* twice, followed by *hare* twice. Then chant *hare rāma* twice, *rāma* twice and then *hare* twice. By this we get the *mahā-mantra*, *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.*

In the *Yajur Vedīya*, the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad* also describes the *svarūpa* and glories of the *mahā-mantra* in this way:

hariḥ auṁ. dvāparānte nārado brahmāṇaṁ jagām kathaṁ bhagavan! gāṁ paryaṭan kalim santare yam-iti. sahovāc brahmā sādhu pṛṣto-smi sarva-srūti-rahasyaṁ gopyaṁ tac-chraṇu yenakali-saṁsāraṁ tariṣyasi. bhagavat ādi-puruṣasya nārāyaṇasya nāmoc-cāraṇa-matreṇa nirdhūt-kalir-bhavti. nāradah punaḥ papraccha. tannām kimiti? sa hovāc hiraṇya-garbhah, "hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare." iti soḍaśakam nāmnām kali kalmaṣa nāśanam. nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva vedeṣu dṛśyate. iti ṣoḍaśa-kalā-vṛtasya jīvasya āvaraṇa-vināśanam. tataḥ prakāśate para-brahma maghāpāye ravi-raṣim-maṇḍalī-veti. punar-nāradaḥ papraccha. bhagavan! ko sya vidhi-riti? sa hovāc nāsya vidhi-riti. sarvadā śūcir-śūcrvā paṭhan brahmaṇaḥ ślokatāṁ samī-patām saru-patāṁ sāyu-jyatāmeti.

"At the end of Dvārapa-yuga, Śrī Nārada went to Śrī Brahmā, and, after offering his obeisances inquired, 'O Lord, how can I cross beyond the influence of this age of Kali while wandering on this earthly planet?'

"Brahmājī replied, 'O son, you have asked an excellent question. Please hear the most confidential secret of the entire *Vedas*

by which you can easily cross this world of Kali. By uttering the name of that *ādi puruṣa* who is Bhagavān Śrī Nārāyaṇa (Kṛṣṇa), the personality of Kali-yuga begins to tremble.'

"Nāradajī further inquired, 'Which name of Śrī Bhagavān and what is its *svarūpa*?'"

"In reply Brahmājī said, '*Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*. In this way this *mahā-mantra*, which is composed of sixteen names, can completely destroy all the sins of Kali-yuga. A superior *sādhana* does not appear in the entire *Vedas*. The *mahā-mantra* is covered by sixteen qualities, which means that it can destroy the five gross elements (*pañca bhuta*) and the eleven senses which cover the *jīva*. Parabrahma then manifests before the *jīva*, just as the sun's rays shine brightly after a covering of cloud is removed.'

"Nāradajī then asked, 'Oh Lord, what are the rules and regulations for chanting this *mahā-mantra*?'

"Brahmājī said, 'There are no rules and regulations for chanting this *mahā-mantra*. One can chant in a pure or an impure state. Moreover, by clearly pronouncing this *mahā-mantra*, one can attain *brahma* (*salokya*, *samīpya*, *sarūpya* and *sāyujya*). Not only that, one can attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the fifth goal of human life (*pañca puruṣārtha*).' "

Śrī Bhakti-chandrika, 7th Paṭal states:

atha mantra-varaṁ vakṣye dvātrim-śad-akṣarā anvitam
sarva-pāpa-praśamanaṁ sarva-durvāsanā analam
catur-varga-paradaṁ saumyaṁ bhaktidaṁ prema-pūrvakam
durbuddhi-haraṇaṁ śuddha-sattva-buddhi-pradāyakam
sarva-arādhyaṁ sarva-sevyaṁ sarveṣām kāma-pūrakam
sarva-adhikār-samyuktam sarva-lokaika-bāndhavam
sarva-akarsaṇa-samyuktaṁ duṣṭa-byādhi-vināśanam
dīkṣā-vidhi-vihīnaṁ ca kāla-ākāla-vivarjitam
vāṇ-mātreṇārcitaṁ bāhma-pūja-avidhyan-apekṣakam
jihvā-sparśan-mātreṇa sarveṣām phala-dāyakam
deśa-kālā-niyamitaṁ sarva-vādisusammatam

"This *mahā-mantra* is endowed with thirty-two syllables and can destroy all sins. Just as fire destroys, this *mahā-mantra* can destroy all evil habits and bestow *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*. Its beautiful form (*svarūpa*) is capable of stealing all of one's foolish, ignorant mentality, and it is the giver of *śuddha sattvika* intelligence. It bestows the symptoms of *prema-bhakti*. It is worshipable and is worthy of being served by all. *Śrī nāma* fulfills everyone's desires. All are qualified to serve this *mahā-mantra*, meaning all are qualified to perform *saṅkīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra*. This *mahā-mantra* is the personal well-wisher of everyone and is endowed with the potency to attract all. It is the destroyer of all afflictions. It does not consider the rules of *dīkṣā*, and is not restricted by time. The *mahā-mantra* is worshipped just by saying it. No external paraphernalia is required. It is capable of giving results simply by its contact with the tongue, without considering the rules pertaining to time, place and circumstance."

The Pipplāda branch of the *Athārva Veda* states:

svanāma-mūla-mantreṇa sarvaṁ hlādayati vibhuḥ
sa eve mūlam-mantraṁ japati haririti kṛṣṇa iti rāma iti

"That *mahā-mantra*, which is composed of the name, form, etc., of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the origin of all *avatāras*, is making everyone joyful. He Himself, in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is clearly chanting the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, the source of all *mantras*."

The following *śloka* explains the result of performing *kīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra*:

mantro guhmaḥ paramo bhakti-vedhyaḥ nām-ānanya-ṣṭāvaṣṭa ca
śobhanānitāni nityaṁ japanti dhīrāste vai māyām-atita-ranti nānye
paramaṁ mantraṁ parama-rahasyaṁ nityamāvartayanti

"The *mahā-mantra* is most confidential and can only be understood through *bhakti*. Eight of its sixteen charming words are *hare kṛṣṇa* and the other eight, *hare rāma*. Therefore, only those intelligent persons who constantly chant these names will be liberated

from *māyā*—and not others. That is why intelligent persons always chant, perform *kīrtana* of and remember the *mahā-mantra*."

In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (Northern Division, Chapter 6) Pipplāda mentions that Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja once prayed to Kratu Muni, "O Lord, if you want to favour me, then please donate to me the names of Hari." At that moment the saintly Kratu Muni gave him the sixteen name *mahā-mantra*. Therefore, an intelligent person should constantly perform *saṅkīrtana* of this *mahā-mantra*: *nāma saṅkīrtanaṁ tasmāt sadā kāryaṁ vipaścitā*.

ŚRĪ CAITANYA MAHĀPRABHU AND THE MAHĀ-MANTRA

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who established the chanting of *śrī hari-nāma saṅkīrtana*, instructs the *bhaktas* to perform *saṅkīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra*.

Śrī Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya says:

viṣṇṇa-cittān kali-ghora-bhītān
sanvīkṣya gauro hari-nāma-mantraṁ
svayaṁ dadau bhakta-janān samā-diśat
saṅkīrtaya dvaṁ nanu nṛtya-vādhyaiḥ

"Out of His causeless mercy, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself gave the *mahā-mantra* to the helpless, fearful *jīvas* of this Kali-yuga, and directed His devotees by saying, 'O *bhaktas*, you should collectively perform *saṅkīrtana* by singing and dancing.' "

harer-nāma-prasādena nistaret pātakī janaḥ
upadeṣṭā svayaṁ kṛṣṇa caitanyo jagadīśvaraḥ
kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devena hari-nāma-prakāśitam
yena kenāpi tat-praptaṁ dhanyo' sau loka-pāvanaḥ

"By the mercy of *hari-nāma*, a sinner can also be delivered because the instructor of *śrī hari-nāma* is the Lord of the universe, Svayaṁ Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore, a person who is fortunate enough to receive this *hari-nāma*, which has been inaugurated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself, can also purify others by his association."

The great poet Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra states in his epic poem, *Caitanya-Caritā* (11-54):

tatah śrī gaurāṅgah samavadadtir pramudito
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

"At the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *sannyāsa* ceremony, the barber who had been asked to shave Him felt morose and was perturbed. Although he held the razor in his hand, he could not bring himself to shave off Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's beautiful hair. Instead he simply wept. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who was fully immersed in *rādhā-bhāva*, became deeply pleased and said, 'O Barber! You must constantly and loudly chant *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*.' Upon hearing these instructions from Śrī Mahāprabhu, that barber began to chant, and, although he continued to weep in distress, he proceeded to shave off Mahāprabhu's hair. He became so absorbed in chanting the *mahā-mantra* that he manifested horripilation (*romañca*) and his bodily hairs stood erect (*pulaka*)."

Caitanya Maṅgala states:

bāhu prasāriyā prabhu brāhmaṇe tulilā
tāra ghare bhakti bhare gāna āraṁbhilā
brāhmaṇera ghara yena haila vṛndāvana
hari-nāma śunibāre āise sarva-jana
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

"Once Mahāprabhu visited the home of a *brāhmaṇa* and embraced him. The *kīrtana* that followed made that home become just like Vṛndāvana and a multitude of people gathered to hear and chant the *mahā-mantra*: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*."

Caitanya Maṅgala also states:

hare kṛṣṇa nāma prabhu bole nirantara
prasanna śrī mukhe hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa bali
vijaya hailā gauracandra kutūhalī

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa bali prema sukhe
pratyakṣa haila āsi advaita-sammukhe

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always chanting *śrī nāma*. One day when He came to the home of Advaita Ācaryā, His face filled with pleasure as He chanted the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*."

Caitanya-caritāmṛta states:

kṛṣṇa nāma mahā-mantra ei t'svabhāva
yei jape tāre kṛṣṇe upajaye bhāva

(C.c.Ādi-līlā 7.83)

"The nature of the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra* is such that when a person chants it, he immediately develops his loving ecstatic relationship with Kṛṣṇa."

kṛṣṇa viṣayaka premā—parama purusārtha
yāra āge tṛṇa-tulya cāri puruṣārtha

(C.c. Ādi-līlā 7.84)

"When the four goals of human life, *dharma* (perfectly performing one's occupational duty), *artha* (accumulating wealth), *kāma* (satisfying one's sensual desires) and *mokṣa* (attaining liberation), stand before *kṛṣṇa prema*, the fifth and topmost goal, they appear as insignificant as straw in the street."

"pancama puruṣārtha-premānand amṛta sindhu
brahmādi ānanda yāra nahe eka bindu"

(C.c. Ādi-līlā 7.85)

"The pleasure derived from *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* appear like a drop in the ocean in the presence of a person who has developed *bhāva*."

"kṛṣṇa-nāmera phal' premā, sarva śāstre kaya"

(C.c. Ādi-līlā 7. 86)

"The conclusion of all *śāstra* is that one should awaken his dormant *kṛṣṇa-prema*."

kali-kāle nāma rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra

(C.c. *Ādi-līlā* 17.22)

"The holy name of Bhagavān, the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, is His *avatāra* in this age of Kali. Just by chanting this name, one associates with Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly. Anyone who does this is certainly delivered."

avatari' caitanya kaila dharma pracāraṇa
kali kāle dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana

(C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 11.98)

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has descended in Kali-yuga to propagate the *dharma* of the age, chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa."

saṅkīrtana-yajñe tāṅre kare ārādhana
sei ta sumedhā āra—kali-hata-jana

(C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 11.99)

"A person who worships Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by performing *saṅkīrtana* should be considered to possess great intelligence. It is understood that one who does not perform *saṅkīrtana* has no intelligence and is a victim of Kali."

nirantara kara kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
helāya mukti pābe, pabe prema-dhana

(C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 25.154)

"Always chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and you will very easily achieve *mukti*. Finally you will receive the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema*."

eka 'nāmābhāse' tomāra pāpa doṣa yābe
āra 'nāma' la-ite kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-pāibe

(C.c. *Madhya-līlā* 25.199)

"Begin to chant the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra* and, at the stage of *nāmabhasa*, when your chanting is almost pure, all your sinful reactions will be removed. When you perfectly chant *hare kṛṣṇa*, you will attain the shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

nāmera phale kṛṣṇa-pade prema upajaya

(C.c. Antya-līlā 3.178)

"The result of chanting *nāma* without offence is that a person will awaken his ecstatic love for the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

kali-kālera dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana

(C.c. Antya-līlā 7.11)

"In Kali-yuga the *dharma* is to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*."

harṣe prabhukalena suna svarūpa-rāma-rāya
nāma-saṅkīrtana-kalau parama upāya

(C.c. Antya-līlā 20. 8)

"In great jubilation Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'My dear Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya, understand that the easiest way to attain *mokṣa* in this age of Kali is by chanting *hari-nāma*.' "

saṅkīrtana-yajñe kalau kṛṣṇa ārādhana
sei ta sumedhā pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa

(C.c. Antya-līlā 20.9)

"In this age of Kali, the system for worshipping Kṛṣṇa is to perform *yajña* by chanting Śrī Bhagavān's name. Someone who does so is considered to be intelligent, and he will definitely attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

nāma-saṅkīrtane haya sarvānatha-nāśa
sarva-śubhodaya kṛṣṇa-premera ullāsa

(C.c. Antya-līlā 20.11)

"By chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, one can eradicate all *anarthas.* In this way all good fortune is awakened and the flow of *kṛṣṇa-prema* begins."

khāite śuite yathā tathā nāma laya
kāla-deśā-niyama nāhi sarva siddhi haya

(C.c. Antya-līlā 20.18)

"One who chants the name while eating or sleeping, regardless of time or place, attains all perfection."

ei-mata hañā yei kṛṣṇa-nāma-laya
śrī kṛṣṇa-caraṇe tāṅra prema upajaya

(C.c. Antya-līlā 20.26)

"A person will definitely awaken *prema* for the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa if he chants *kṛṣṇa-nāma* like this."

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī states in the introduction to his commentary on the *mahā-mantra*:

ekadā kṛṣṇavirahād dhyāyantī priyasangamam
manovāṣpanirāsārthaṁ jalpatīdaṁ muhurmuhuha
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
yāni nāmāni virahe jajāpa vārṣabhānavī
tānye va tadbhāvayukto gauracandro jajāpa ha
śrī caitanya-mukhod gīrṇa hare kṛṣṇeti varṇakaḥ
majjayanto jagat premṇi vijayantāṁ tadā vayāḥ

"Once, Śrīmatī Rādhikā was feeling overwhelming distress due to separation from Her beloved Śyāmasundara and She meditated upon meeting Him. To remove Her fire of separation, She began to chant the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is absorbed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, also chanted these names. Thus, Kṛṣṇa's sixteen names consisting of thirty-two syllables, the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, came from the lotus mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. May this *mahā-mantra*, which makes

the entire universe become absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-prema*, be graciously and conspicuously present above all else. *Jaya ho*! *Jaya ho*! Let there be complete victory for the *mahā-mantra*!"

Reference to the *mahā-mantra* is also found in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa*, 6.55:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

"The three names, Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma, which are in the vocative case, comprise the *mahā-mantra*."

The following *ślokas* from *Caitanya Bhagavata* also show the supremacy of *hari-nāma*: (*Ādi* 14.137,139-143), (*Madhya* 6.117), (*Madhya* 23.74-78) and (*Madhya* 28.28).

COMMENTARIES ON THE MAHĀ-MANTRA

MĀDHURYA-MAYĪ

The *mahā-mantra* consists of three words. Each word is in the vocative case[2], meaning it is a 'calling out', or an address. These words are Hare, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma.

vijñāpya bhagavat-tattvaṁ cid ghanānandi vigraham
haratyavidhaṁ tatkāryamato haririti smṛtaḥ
ānandaikasukhaḥ śrīmān śyāmaḥ kamala locanaḥ
gokulānando nandandanaḥ kṛṣṇa īryate
vaidagdhī sārāsarvasvaṁ mūrtalīlā dhidaivatam
śrī rādhāṁ ramaya nityaṁ rām ityabhidīyate

(Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa)

"Śrī Bhagavān is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*, the embodiment of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Because He is able to eradicate all ignorance, the term Hari (one who takes away) is an appropriate way to remember Him. It is only lotus-eyed Nanda-nandana, Śrī Syāmasundara, the bestower of bliss to the residents of Gokula, who is referred to as Kṛṣṇa (the all-attractive one). Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *līlā-vigraha* (personification of pastimes) and the crest-jewel of all expertise and wisdom. Because He eternally enjoys conju-

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[2] The vocative case means to call out or to address someone. In Sanskrit grammar the last letter of a name will sometimes change in the vocative case e.g. 'Lalita', becomes 'Lalite'. The same rule applies to Harā, which becomes Hare. The names Kṛṣṇa and Rāma remain the same.

gal pastimes with Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He is also known as Rāma (the enjoyer)."

AIŚVARYA-MAYĪ

The *Āgama śāstra* states:

harati trividhaṁ tāpaṁ janmakoṭi śtod bhavam
papaṁ ca smaratāṁ yasmāt tasmād dhaririti smṛtaḥ
kṛṣirbhūvāckaḥ śabdo ṇaśca nirvṛtivā-cakaḥ
tayoraikyaṁ paraṁ brahma kṛṣṇa ityabhidhīyate
ramante yogino 'nante satyānande cidāt mani
iti rāmapade nāsau paraṁ brahmā 'bhidīyate

"Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known as Hari because He destroys the three-fold afflictions of countless births as well as the sinful activities performed by the body, mind and words of those devotees who remember Him. *Kṛṣ* means 'all attractive' and *ṇa* means 'joyful'. The combination of these syllables refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive *parabrahma*. *Yogīs* on the transcendental platform derive great joy by meditating upon Him as the infinite form of supreme bliss (*nityānanda-svarūpa*), and as He who has a transcendental form (*cinmaya svarūpa*). For this reason, He is called Rāma (the supreme enjoyer)."

YUGALA-SMARAṆA-MAYĪ

Śruti śāstra states:

mano harati kṛṣṇasya kṛṣṇa hṛādasvarupiṇī
tato harā śrī rādhaiva tasyāḥ saṁbodhanaṁ hare
apagṛhma trapāṁ dharmaṁ mānaṁ vrajastriyaḥ
veṇunā karṣati gṛhāt tena kṛṣṇa' bhidhīyate
ramayatyaniśaṁ rūpa lāvaṇyair vraja yoṣitām
manaḥ pañcendriyaṇīha rāmastasmāt prakīrtitaḥ

"Śrī Rādhā is the *hlādinī śakti* (pleasure potency) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is known as Harā (one who steals away) because She can capti-

vate Kṛṣṇa's mind. Harā is addressed as Hare. *Vraja-rāja-kumāra*, the son of the King of Vraja, is known as Kṛṣṇa. Because the sound of His flute is so attractive to the cowherd damsels, they lose their natural shyness, sense of *dharma*, pride, composure and leave their households. Therefore, He is known as Kṛṣṇa. The extraordinary beauty of His form (*rūpa-lāvaṇya*) always surcharges the minds and senses of the cowherd damsels with ever-increasing bliss. For this reason He is glorified as Rāma."

COMMENTARY BY ŚRĪLA JĪVA GOSVĀMĪ

HARE—Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra's transcendental beauty captivates the minds of all, but Śrīmatī Rādhikā captivates the mind of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by exercising Her unrivalled cleverness. Therefore, She is known as Harā. The vocative case of Harā is Hare.

KṚṢṆA—Śrī Hari, who is adorned with qualities which bewilder the three worlds, attracts Śrīmatī Rādhikā by His youthful beauty and the sweet sound of His flute.Therefore, He is called Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive one.

HARE—Śrī Kṛṣṇa kidnapped doe-eyed Śrīmatī Rādhikā, taking Her to a secluded *kuñja* within the *rāsa-maṇḍala*. This has been learned from the words of *mahā-puruṣas*. Therefore, Rādhikā is known as Harā. Harā in its vocative case becomes Hare.

KṚṢṆA—The magnificent effulgence that emanates from His limbs can convert gold into *śyāma varṇa* (a dark sapphire lustre). That Rādhā-Ramaṇa Śyāmasundara is called Kṛṣṇa.

KṚṢṆA—Śrī Hari manifested Śyāma Kuṇḍa, the topmost of all *sarovaras*, in the forest of Vraja near Govardhana. He did this in accordance with the desire of His beloved Śrī Rādhikā, and He attracted all *tīrthas* to it. Learned people, who call Him Kṛṣṇa, understand this deep secret.

KṚṢṆA—Although His pastimes on the banks of the Yamunā in Vṛndāvana bewilder the world, the all-attractive *dhīra-lalita-nāyaka*

Śrī Hari is attracted by the transcendental *mahābhāva* of Śrī Rādhikā. That is why learned people call Him Kṛṣṇa.

HARE—Whilst living in Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa stole the life force of the strong bull-like demon, Aristāsura, and at that very moment Śrīmatī Rādhikā, in great jubilation, loudly chanted "Hari Hari!" For this reason Śrī Rādhā is known as Harā. Harā is addressed as Hare.

HARE—Śrī Rādhikā sings the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in indistinct tones and sometimes, out of intense affection, She sings loudly. Therefore, when learned scholars discriminate between *rasas*, they refer to Her as Harā. Harā is addressed as Hare.

HARE—In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rādhikā is so absorbed in playful pastimes and *rasa*, that She steals away the flute which falls from the hands of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.This is why Rādhikā Devī is known as Harā. The address for Harā is Hare.

RĀMA—Śrī Kṛṣṇa, crest-jewel of the ingenious, knows the art of embracing. He is known as Rāma because He wanders with Śrī Rādhikā, playing and enjoying with Her in the *kuñjas* of Govardhana.

HARE—Śrī Rādhikā is most merciful. She steals all the miseries of the *bhaktas* and daily bestows inner happiness upon them. Thus, She is known as Harā and is addressed as Hare.

RĀMA—The minds of the *bhaktas* who perform *bhajana* wander in the topmost ocean of bliss, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For this reason that Śyāmasundara *vigraha*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is known as Rāma.

RĀMA—In the *kuñjas* Śrīmatī Rādhikā pleases Śrī Hari with Her *prema*. Therefore, according to the definition of *ramayati ānandayati*, 'He who gives happiness', He is called Rāma. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known as Rāma because He unites with Śrī Rādhā.

RĀMA—When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the giver of pleasure to the *bhaktas*, saw all the Vrajavāsīs fearful and weeping, He swallowed the for-

est fire, thus giving them great pleasure. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who arranges for His *bhaktas* to enjoy with Him, is called Rāma.

HARE—Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā Purī to kill Kaṁsa and other demons. His sole intention was to return to Vraja and meet with Śrī Rādhikā. She attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa from *dhāmas* like Mathurā and brings Him to Vraja. For this reason She is called Harā (one who steals). Harā is addressed as Hare.

HARE—Śrī Nanda-nandana came from Mathurā and Dvārakā to steal away all the miseries of the Vrajavāsīs. That Nanda-nandana, who is endowed with pastimes that captivate the mind of Śrī Rādhikā, is called Hari. The word Hari becomes Hare in the vocative case.

Thus ends the commentary on the mahā-mantra
by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

COMMENTARY BY ŚRĪ GOPĀLA GURU GOSVĀMĪ

Mahā-bhāgavatas eternally remember the all-blissful *śyāma kiśora vigraha*, Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa, who can destroy ignorance as well as material existence arising from ignorance.

When *mahā-bhāgavatas* see that their disciples are qualified, meaning that they are grateful, silent, victorious over their senses, pure-hearted and above all, that their hearts are full of attachment (*anurāga*) to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa, they bless them by mercifully giving them the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, which is composed of three words.

HARE—Fire can burn anything, even without our desiring it to burn. Similarly, Prabhu can remove all the sins of a person with a wicked mind regardless of his mood in remembering Him. Thus His name is Hari, He who steals away.

Sac-cid-ānanda vigraha Bhagavān reveals His *tattva* in the hearts of those who chant and remember His names. Simultaneously, He

destroys the ignorance that lies there. That Prabhu is remembered by the name Hari.

He is called Hari because He removes the threefold miseries of the moving and non-moving living entities. The minds of worldly people are captivated by hearing and chanting His transcendental qualities. Therefore, His name is Hari. His sweet beauty captivates the minds of millions of *kāmadevas* (Cupids). Thus the Prince of Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is known as Hari. The vocative form of Hari is Hare.

To fulfill the loving pleasure of *rāsa*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā captivates the mind of Kṛṣṇa by Her form, qualities and by the nourishment of Her *prema*. Thus, gentle persons talk and sing about the *hlādini śakti* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrī Rādhā, by using the name Harā. Harā is addressed as Hare.

KṚṢṆA—The verb *kṛṣ* means all-attractive and *ṇa* means all-blissful. When combined, they indicate the all-attractive and blissful *parabrahma*, known by the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

That Śrī Govinda, whose body is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is primeval and the cause of all causes, is known by the name Kṛṣṇa.

The son of King Nanda, who has lotus eyes and a dark blue complexion, is the only source of bliss for the residents of Gokula. He is referred to as Kṛṣṇa.

RĀMA—Śaṅkarajī said to Pārvatī, "*He* Devī! By pronouncing the first syllable of the word Rāma (*rā*) all sins leave the body, and when one chants the syllable *ma*, the door of the mouth closes so they cannot re-enter.

Yogīs meditate on *parā-tattva*, the transcendental, unlimited truth and the embodiment of pleasure. That *parā-tattva parama brahma* is known as Rāma.

The predominating deity (*adhiṣṭhātri deva*) of all *rasa* filled pastimes, the crest-jewel of the clever, *rasika śekhara* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, eternally enjoys with Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Thus, He is referred to as Rāma.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa attracts the mind of Śrī Rādhikā and thus enjoys performing pastimes with Her. He is, therefore, known as Rāma. In

the *Krama-dīpikā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke to Candramā, the moon. "Rādhā's name is superior to hundreds of My names. Even I do not know what benefit awaits that person who always chants and remembers Śrī Rādhā."

HARE—*kṛṣṇasya mano haratīti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ saṁbodhane he hare*: Śrīmati Rādhikā, who steals the mind of Kṛṣṇa, is called Harā. The vocative of Harā is Hare.

KṚṢṆA—*rādhāyā manaḥ karṣtīti kṛṣṇaḥ tasya saṁbodhane he kṛṣṇa*: Kṛṣṇa means He who attracts the mind of Śrī Rādhā. The address to Him is '*He* Kṛṣṇa!'

HARE—*kṛṣṇasya lokalajjādharyārdi sarvaṁ haratīti harā rādhā, tasyāh saṁbodhane he hare*: Śrī Rādhika causes Kṛṣṇa to lose (*harā*) all His reputation as shy, sober, patient and modest, etc. The address to Her is '*He* Hare!'

KṚṢṆA—*rādhāyā lokalajjādhaiyārdi sarva karṣtīti kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he kṛṣṇa*: He who attracts Śrīmatī Rādhikā in such a way that She loses all Her shyness and patience is called Kṛṣṇa. The address to Him is '*He* Kṛṣṇa!'

KṚṢṆA—*yatra yatra rādhā tiṣṭhati gacchati vā tatra tatra sā paśyati kṛṣṇo maṁ spṛśati, balāt kancukādikaṁ sarvaṁ hartīti kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he kṛṣṇa*: Wherever Śrīmati Rādhikā stands or goes, She sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa touching Her and forcibly attracting Her. For this reason He is called Kṛṣṇa (the all-attractive) and addressed '*He* Kṛṣṇa!'

KṚṢṆA—*punarharṣatāṁ gamyati vanaṁ karṣtīti kṛṣṇaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he kṛṣṇa*: He gives pleasure to Śrī Rādhā, who again ventures to the forest of Vṛndāvana, being attracted irresistibly by the sound of His flute. For this reason He is called Kṛṣṇa and addressed '*He* Kṛṣṇa!'

HARE—*yatra kṛṣṇo gacchati tiṣṭhati vā tatra tatra paśyati rādhā mamāgre pārśveṁ sarvatra tiṣṭhati viharati iti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ*

sambodhane he hare: Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees Rādhā next to Him wherever He stands or moves—in every direction—and hence His consciousness becomes captivated by Her. Therefore, She is called Harā. The address to Her is '*He* Hare!'

HARE—*punastaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ harati svasthanam abhisārayatī harā rādhā, tasyāḥ saṁbodhane he hare*: She again steals away Kṛṣṇa to a secret rendezvous, therefore, the address to Her is Harā. Harā changes to Hare in the vocative case.

HARE—*kṛṣṇaṁ vanaṁ harati vanamāgamayatīti harā rādhā, tasyā-saṁbodhane he hare*: Śrī Rādhā forcibly takes Kṛṣṇa to the forest groves of Vṛndāvana. Thus, Śrī Rādhika is called Harā. The address to Her is '*He* Hare!'

RĀMA—*ramayati taṁ narmani rīkṣaṇādi neti rāmaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he rāma*: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's smile, laughter and glance create pleasure for Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and therefore, His name is Rāma. He is addressed '*He* Rāma!'

HARE—*tātkālikaṁ dhairyāvalaṁ bānādikaṁ kṛṣṇasya haratīti harā rādhā tasyāh sambodhane he hare*: The association of Śrī Rādhikā causes Kṛṣṇa to suddenly lose His composure. Therefore, She is Harā. The address to Her is '*He* Hare!'

RĀMA—*cumban-stanā karṣaṇā linganādibhiḥ ramate, iti rāmaḥ tasya saṁbodhane he rāma*: Kṛṣṇa enjoys Śrī Rādhā through confidential caresses, embraces, etc. The address to Him is '*He* Rāma!'

RĀMA—*punastaṁ puruṣocitaṁ kṛtvā ramayatīti rāmaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he rāma*: Kṛṣṇa is He who enjoys conjugal pastimes with His consort, Śrī Rādhā, by making Her play the dominant role in love. He is thus called Rāma (the enjoyer), and is addressed '*He* Rāma!'

RĀMA—*punastatra ramate it rāmaḥ, tasya saṁbodhane he rāma*: Because He repeatedly enjoys pleasure, He is called Rāma and is addressed '*He* Rāma!'

HARE—*punaḥ rāsānte kṛṣṇasya mano hṛatvā gaccatīti harā rādhā, tasyāḥ saṁbodhane he hare*: As *rāsa-līlā* concludes and She has captured Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mind, She goes away. She is therefore called Harā. She is addressed '*He* Hare!'

HARE—*rādhāyā mano hratvā gaccatīti hariḥ kṛṣṇa, tasya saṁbodhane he hare*: Similarly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, at the conclusion of *rāsa-līlā* also captures Śrī Rādhikā's mind. Thus He is called Hari. The address to Kṛṣṇa here is '*He* Hare!'

Thus ends the commentary on the mahā-mantra
by Śrī Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī

COMMENTARY BY ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVINODA ṬHĀKURA

***HE* HARE!**—*maccintaṁ hṛatvā bhava bandha nānmo caya*: *He* Hare! Please captivate my mind and release me from material existence.

***HE* KṚṢṆA!**—*maccit tamākarṣa*: *He* Kṛṣṇa! Please attract my restless mind towards You.

***HE* HARE!**—*svamadhuryaṇa mac cinttam hara*: *He* Hare! Captivate my mind with Your spontaneous *mādhurya*.

***HE* KṚṢṆA!**—*svabhaktadvārā bhajana jnāndānana maccittaṁ śodhaya*: *He* Kṛṣṇa! Please make my mind pure with the knowledge of *bhajana* as given by Your *bhaktas* who understand the science of *bhakti-tattva*.

***HE* KṚṢṆA!**—*nāma rūpa guṇa līlādiṣu manniṣṭhaṁ kuru*: *He* Kṛṣṇa! Please make me have staunch faith in Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

***HE* KṚṢṆA!**—*rucirbhavatu me*: *He* Kṛṣṇa! May I develop a taste for Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

***HE* HARE!**—*nija sevā yogayaṁ maṁ kuru*: *He* Hare! Please make me qualified to serve You.

HE HARE!—*svasevā māde śaya*: *He* Hare! Please make me qualified and order me to serve You.

HE HARE!—*svapreṣṭhena sah svābhīṣṭa līlāṁ śrāvaya*: *He* Hare! Please make me hear of Your sweet pastimes with Your dearmost *bhaktas*.

HE RĀMA!—*preṣṭhayā sah svābhīṣṭalīlāṁ mām śrāvaya*: *He* Rāma! Rādhikā-Rāmaṇa! Make me hear Your most cherished pastimes and Your sweet affectionate voice in Goloka in the company of You and Your beloved Rādhikā.

HE HARE!—*ṣvapreṣṭhena sah svābhīṣṭalīlāṁ maṁ darśaya*: *He* Hare! Śrīmatī Rādhike! Please give me *darśana* of Your dearest pastimes with You and Your beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

HE RĀMA!— *preṣṭhayā sah svābhīṣṭalīlāṁ maṁ darśaya*: *He* Rāma! Rādhikā-Rāmana! Please reveal to me Your pastimes with Your beloved.

HE RĀMA!—*nāma rūpa guṇa līlā smaraṇādiṣu māṁ yojaya*: *He* Rāma! You who perform pastimes with Your eternal associates, please engage me in remembering Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

HE RĀMA!—*tatra maṁ nija sevā yogayaṁ kuru*! O You who give pleasure to Your eternal associates, Śyāma! Please make me qualified to serve You while remembering Your name, form, qualities and pastimes.

HE HARE!—*maṁ svāngī kṛtya ramasva*: *He* Hare! Please accept this fallen, wicked person and play with me as I deserve.

HE HARE!—*mayā sah ramasva*: *He* Hare! Please perform Your transcendental sports with me. This is my only prayer at Your lotus feet.

(Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta)

Thus ends the commentary
of Śrī Sacidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

nara harināma antare acchu bhāvaha
habe bhava sagare pāra
dhara re śravaṇe nara harināma sādare
cintāmaṇi uha sāra
yadi kṛta-pāpi ādare kabhu mantraka
rāja śravaṇe kare pāna
śrī kṛṣna caitanya bale haya tacchu durgama
pāpa tāpa saha trāṇa
karaha gaura-guru-vaisṇava-āśraya
laha nara harināma-hāra
saṁsāre nāma lai suktṛi haiyā tare
āpāmara durācāra
ithe kṛta-viṣaya-tṛṣna pahuña-nāma-hārā
'yo dhāraṇe śrama-bhāra
kutṛṣna jagadānanda kṛta-kalmaṣa
kumati rahala kārāgāra

"O brother! When you have internally realized this *hari-nāma*, you can cross the ocean of birth and death (*saṁsara*).

"O brother! When this *hari-nāma* is very respectfully placed in the ear, it can be drunk, heard and absorbed because its very essence is *cintāmaṇi*. Even if sinful persons or kings drink *śrī nāma* by respectfully hearing this *mantra*, then Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that all of their sins will be vanquished along with all the miseries in the burning fire of this material world (*adhyātmika*, *adibhautika* and *adhidaivika*).

"O brother! Please take the shelter of Gaura, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas and take this garland of *śrī hari-nāma*. Even the most wretched and sinful will find relief in chanting this *hari-nāma*, and all their material desires and endeavours will be revealed as so much useless labour. Jagadānanda says that any sinful person whose mentality is wicked and who has innumerable mundane desires will always reside in this material jail, but, by chanting

śrī hari-nāma, one will leave all *māyā* and reach the lotus feet of Śrī Gaurāṅga and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa."

(Pada-kalptaru Gaura pada Taranginī,
Taranga, uchhvāsa 2, pada 59)

	1 ☟			2 ☝		3 ☟		4 ☝	
nara	**ha**	*ri-nāma anta*		**re**	*achu bhāvaha*	**ha**	*be bhavasāga*	**re**	*pāra*
dhara	**re**	*śravaṇe nara*		**ha**	*ri-nāma sāda*	**re**	*cintāmaṇi u*	**ha**	*sāra*
yadi	**kṛ**	*ta-pāpi āda*		**re**	*kabhu mantraka-*	**rā**	*ja śravaṇe ka*	**re**	*pāna*
śrīkṛ	**ṣṇa**	*caitanya*	*bale*	**ha**	*ya tuchu durga*	**ma**	*pāpa tāpa sa*	**ha**	*trāṇa*
kara	**ha**	*gaura-guru-*	*vai*	**ṣṇa**	*va āśraya la*	**ha**	*nara harinā*	**ma**	*hāra*
saṁsā	**re**	*nāma lai*	*su*	**kṛ**	*ti haiyā ta*	**re**	*āpāmara du*	**rā**	*cāra*
ithe	**kṛ**	*ta - viṣaya -*	*tṛ*	**ṣṇa**	*pahuṁ-nāma-hā*	**rā**	*yo dhāraṇe śra*	**ma**	*bhāra*
kutṛ	**ṣṇa**	*jagadānanda*		**kṛ**	*ta-kalmaṣa ku*	**ma**	*ti rahala kā*	**rā**	*gāra*

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

This illustration reveals the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra concealed within the Pada-kalpataru song on the opposite page.

THE GLORIES OF ŚRĪ HARI-NĀMA

One can find an abundance of glorification of Śrī Bhagavān's name in *śāstra*. A portion of those glories will be mentioned here.

NĀMA SVARŪPA

nāma cintāmaniḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrnaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ

(Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu Eastern Division, 2nd Wave 108)

"There is no difference between *nāma* (Kṛṣṇa's name) and *nāmī* (Kṛṣṇa) because *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is *cintāmaṇi svarūpa* (giving all transcendental good fortune), and Svayaṁ Kṛṣṇa is *caitanya rasa vigraha* (the form of transcendental *rasa*), complete, beyond *māyā* and eternally liberated."

NĀMA BESTOWS ALL PERFECTION IN KALI-YUGA

kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.3.51)

"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality in this age. Simply by chanting the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and attain Bhagavān."

kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 12.3.52)

"The result which is attained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Śrī Bhagavān (*dhyāna*), in Tretā-yuga by performing opulent *yajñas*, and in Dvāpara-yuga by performing *arcana*, is easily available in Kali-yuga by performing *hari-nāma kīrtana*."

kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 17.22)

"In Kali-yuga, the *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes in the form of His name. Simply by chanting this name, the entire world can be delivered."

nāma vinā kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma ei śāstra-marma

(Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 7.74)

"In Kali-yuga there is no other *sādhana* but to chant *hari-nāma*. It is the essence of all Vedic *mantras*, and the purport of all *śāstra*."

THE GLORIES OF NĀMA AS DESCRIBED BY THE ANCIENT ĀCĀRYAS

aṁhaḥ saṅ harate khilaṁ sakṛdudayādeva-sakal-lokasya
taraṇi riva timir-jalandhi jayati jaganmangalaṁ harernāma

(Padyavalī 16 sankhāy dhṛta Śrīdhara Svāmī śloka)

"All glories to *hari-nāma*, which is auspicious for the entire world! Just as the rising sun dissipates all darkness, if *hari-nāma* rises just once, it can destroy all of a person's sins."

ākṛṣṭih kṛtacetasaṁ sumanasāmucchāṭanaṁ cāṁhasā
macaṇḍalamamukalo kasulabho vaśyaśca mukti śriyaḥ

no dīkṣām na ca satkriyaṁ na ca puraścaryām manāgīkṣate
mantro yaṁ rāsanāspṛgeva phalati ṣrī kṛṣṇa nāmātmakaḥ

(Padyavalī 18)

"The minds of those who are *guṇatīta* (beyond the three modes) are attracted to *nāma*. That Śrī Kṛṣṇa *nāma svarūpa* (Kṛṣṇa in the form of the *mahā-mantra*) is easily accessible to those who are lower than *cāṇḍālas* and also captivates the opulence of *mukti*. It awards results even by its initial contact with the tongue. It does not consider whether or not a person has taken *dīkṣā*, performed pious activity, or taken vows of austerity."

THE GLORIES OF CHANTING NĀMA EXCEED THE GLORIES OF DIRECT BRAHMA REALIZATION

yad-brahma-sākṣāt-kṛti-niṣṭhayāpi vināśam āyāti vinā na bhogaiḥ
apaiti nāma ! sphuraṇena tat te prārabdha-karmeti viranti vedaḥ

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa Nāmāṣṭakam 4, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī)

"O *nāma*! The *Vedas* loudly declare that a *bhakta's* fructified sinful reaction (*prārabdha karma*), which cannot be eliminated even by resolute meditation on impersonal *brahma*, is at once mitigated by Your appearance on the tongue even without his undergoing any suffering."

THE SUPERIORITY OF NĀMA KĪRTANA

adhicchat-smaraṇaṁ visṇorvahrāyāsena sādhyate
oṣṭhaspandanamatreṇa kirttanstu tato varam

(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, 11/236 Vaiṣṇava Cintāmaṇi Vākya)

"Although Viṣṇu is the deliverer of all sins, remembrance of Him is only attained after a person has endeavoured with great difficulty over a prolonged period of time. But those who spontane-

ously perform *viṣṇu-kīrtana* are superior to them because, by *nāma-kīrtana*, or rather by *nāmābhāsa* (a shadow of *nāma*), one can be liberated from bondage to this material world."

THE SUPERIORITY OF NĀMA-KĪRTANA COMPARED TO DHYĀNA & PŪJĀ

jayati jayati nāmānanda-rūpaṁ murāre
viramita-nija-dharma-dhyāna-pūjādiyatnam
katham api sakṛdāttaṁ muktidaṁ prāṇināṁ yat
paramamṛtam ekaṁ jīvanaṁ bhūṣaṇaṁ me

(Śrī Bṛhad-Bhāgavatamṛtam 1.1.9, Sanātana Gosvāmī)

"All glories, all glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Murāri's name, the embodiment of divine bliss! It halts the cycle of birth and death and relieves one of all painful endeavours in practicing religion, meditation, charity, deity worship and austerity. It awards liberation to one who utters it even once. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* stands alone as the supreme nectar and sole treasure of my life."

yena janmaśtaiḥ pūrvāṁ vāsudevaḥ samarcitaḥ
tanmukhe harināmāni sadā tiṣṭhanti bhārata

(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11. 237 śāstra vākya)

"O great descendant of Bharata! The name of Śrī Hari will remain eternally on the lips of those who have performed *arcana* of Vāsudeva in their previous hundred births."

NĀMA IS NOT GOVERNED BY RULES REGARDING TIME, PLACE OR CIRCUMSTANCE

na deśaniyamo rājan na kālaniyamastathā
vidhyate nātra sandeho viṣṇonārmānukīrttane
kālo 'sti dāne yajñe ca snāne kālo 'sti sajjape
viṣṇuh sankīrttane kālo nastyatra pṛthivītale

(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11th vibhagha. 206 sankhyā dhṛta)

"O King! It is stated unequivocally that time and place are not considered in the performance of*kīrtana* of Śrī Viṣṇu's names. Such rules apply to giving in charity, performing *yajña*, and chanting other types of *japa*. On this earth planet, however, such consideration does not apply to the performance of *sankīrtana* of Śrī Viṣṇu's names."

na deśaniyamastastin na kālani yamastathā
nocchiṣṭadau niṣedho 'sti śrī harernāmni nalubdhaka

(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11th vibhāga. 202 Viṣṇo dharmottara-vākya)

"O Hunter! Time and place are not considered in the performance of *kīrtana* of Śrī Hari's name. Although a persons mouth may be full of foodstuffs or he may be in an unclean state, he is not prohibited from performing *nāma-kīrtana*."

madhura madaram etan maṅgalām maṅgalānāṁ
sakala-nigama-vallī sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara! nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa nāma

(Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11. 234 sankyādhṛta Skanda Purāṇa vakya)

"*Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is the sweetest of the sweet and the most auspicious of all that is auspicious. It is the flourishing creeper, the eternal, fully ripened fruit of the Bhāgavata, and the embodiment of knowledge, *cit-śakti*. O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty! Even if someone chants the holy name only once, with faith or indifference (*helā*), he is immediately delivered from this ocean of birth and death!"

NĀMA SAṄKĪRTANA IS THE SĀDHANA AND THE SĀDHYA FOR EVERYONE

etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam
yogināṁ nṛpa nirṇītaṁ harer nāmānukīrtanam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.1.11)

"O King! Previous *ācāryas* have announced this *siddhānta*: chanting and remembering the name of Śrī Hari again and again is the primary *sādhana* and *sādhya* for those persons who desire to attain the heavenly planets, liberation, freedom from material desires, as well as for the self-satisfied *yogīs*."

HARI-NĀMA

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

The ocean of material existence is very difficult to cross without the mercy of Parameśvara. It is not only difficult, but impossible. Even though the *jīvas* are superior to matter, they are by nature weak and dependent on Bhagavān as their sole protector, guardian and saviour. The *jīva* is *anu-caitanya*, an atomic particle. He is dependent on and the servant of Parama-Caitanya Bhagavān. In other words, Parama-Caitanya Bhagavān is the refuge of all *jīvas.* This world of matter is created by *māyā* and, therefore, the position of the *jīva* is the same as that of an offender who is in prison. The *jīva* wanders throughout this world as a result of his opposition to Bhagavān. Those *jīvas* who are opposed to Bhagavān are called *baddha-jīvas* (conditioned souls) because they are chained by *māyā*. On the contrary, those *jīvas* who follow Bhagavān are released from *māyā* and are called *mukta-jīvas* (liberated souls). This difference is due to the contrary conditions in which the unlimited *jīvas* are situated. Hence, there are two divisions, *baddha-jīvas* and *mukta-jīvas*.

By performing *sādhana*, the *baddha-jīva* attains the mercy of Bhagavān thus he becomes capable of breaking the powerful chains of *māyā*. After lengthy contemplation, our great *maharṣis* have established three types of *sādhana*: *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*.

Varṇāśrama dharma, *tapasyā*, *yajña*, *dāna*, *vrata* and *yoga* are mentioned in *śāstras* as limbs of *karma* and their results are clearly described. By deeply understanding the distinct nature of these results, the primary effects of executing *karma* are revealed. They

are: 1) enjoyment on the earthly planets, 2) enjoyment of the heavenly planets, 3) relief from disease and 4) the knowledge that great fortune will arise by performing good *karma*[3]. If we separate the fourth effect—performance of good *karma* will result in great fortune—from the other three, it seems that the results of enjoying the heavenly planets, enjoying the earthly planets and curing disease, which the *jīva* acquires by performing *karma*, are all perishable. They will be destroyed in Śrī Bhagavān's wheel of time. It is not possible to become free from the bondage of *māyā* by attaining these results. On the contrary, the desire to execute more *karma* will increase, and this will lead to further bondage to *māyā*. The results of good *karma* are negligible if that *karma* is not performed in accordance with the rules and regulations of *śāstra*.

In this regard, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.2.8) states:

dharmaḥ svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsāṁ viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratiṁ śrama eva hi kevalam

"The main purpose of *varṇāśrama dharma* is to simplify the life of a person who is performing his natural occupational duty, so that he has sufficient time to hear *hari-kathā*. However, if an attraction for *hari-kathā* is not inspired, then all the religious activities he performs in accordance with *varṇāśrama dharma* will be so much useless labour." The ocean of material existence cannot be crossed by *karma*. I will explain this briefly:

Jñāna is also considered a *sādhana* by which a high goal is achieved. The result of *jñāna* is *ātma-śuddhi* (purification of the soul). *Ātmā* (soul) is beyond matter, but when a *jīva* forgets this reality and takes shelter of matter, he becomes lost on the path of *karma*.

By discussing *jñāna*, a person can understand that he is not composed of matter but is transcendental. This type of *jñāna* is generally called *naiṣkarmya* (self-realization). In the stage of *naiṣkarmya*, the *jīva* is only able to relish a limited amount of bliss (*ānanda*). This stage is also called *ātmārāma* (in which one finds pleasure in the self, *ātmā*, alone). But when the *jīva* begins to realize his eter-

nal nature, and starts to relish his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the stage of *naiṣkarmya*, or *ātmārāma*, becomes completely insignificant. For this reason Devarṣi Nārada states in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.5.12):

naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitaṁ
na śobhate jñānam alaṁ nirañjanam

"Although knowledge of self-realization is free from all material affinity, it is not befitting if devoid of a conception of Bhagavān."

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.7.10) also mentions:

ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīṁ bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ

"Parama-Caitanya Hari possesses one extraordinary quality: He attracts all varieties of persons who are *ātmārāma* and are thus free from all kinds of material bondage, to engage in *sevā* to Him."

Therefore, *jñāna* and *karma* can only be called limbs of *sādhana* when *karma*, by its effect, provides great fortune to perform increasingly improved *karma* and then *jñāna* renounces useless *karma*. This performance of good *karma* and the rejection of impersonal *jñāna* will lead us to *bhakti sādhana*. In and of themselves, *jñāna* and *karma* are not accepted as limbs of *sādhana* except when they lead us to *bhakti*. It is then that they have some significance. Therefore, only *bhakti* is called *sādhana*. When *karma* and *jñana* lead us to *bhakti*, they are considered a *sādhana*. Otherwise, *bhakti*, by its very nature, is the exclusive *svarūpa* (form) of *sādhana*.

The decision of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.14.20) clearly explains this:

na sādhayati māṁ yogo na sāṅkhyaṁ dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā

"*He* Uddhava! *Karma yoga*, *saṅkhyā yoga* or *varṇāśrama dharma* cannot please Me, nor can study of the *Vedas*, austerity or renunciation. Only the performance of pure *bhakti* actually pleases Me."

Performing *bhakti* is the only way to please Bhagavān. There is no other means. There are nine kinds of *sādhana bhakti*: *śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (chanting), *smaraṇa* (remembering), *arcana* (wor-

shipping), *vandana* (praying), *pāda-sevanam* (offering obeisances), *dāsya* (service), *sakhya* (friendship) and *ātmā-nivedana* (full surrender). *Śravaṇa, kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* are the primary limbs of *sādhana*. Śrī Bhagavān's name, form, qualities and pastimes should be the object of a person's *śravaṇa, kīrtana* etc.

Śrī Nāma is the original seed *svarūpa* (*bīja-svarūpa*). Thus, according to *śāstra, hari-nāma* is the root of all worship.

harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā

(Bṛhad-nāradiya Purāna 3.8.126)

"In Kali-yuga there is no deliverance for the *jīva* except by the chanting of *hari-nāma*."

The word *kalau* means that there is never a time when *hari-nāma* is not the way for deliverance. It is especially beneficial to take shelter of this all powerful *hari-nāma*. All other *mantras* are weak.

In relation to *hari-nāma* the *Padma Purāṇa* states:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes in his commentary on the above *śloka*:

ekameva sac-cid-ānanda–rasādi rūpaṁ tattvaṁ

"*Śrī kṛṣṇa-tattva* is the non-dual form of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*advaya sac-cid-ānanda svarūpa*)." He has appeared in two forms: (1) *nāmī*, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *vigraha* and (2) *nāma*, the form of His name.

The essence of *tattva* is that Kṛṣṇa is *sarva-śaktimān*, the posessor of all potencies. The splendour of the supreme *puruṣa* is the splendour of His *śakti*. Kṛṣṇa's *śakti* takes shelter of Him, and without Kṛṣṇa's *śakti* no one can understand Him. The effect of *śakti* manifests *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa's form. The blissful effect of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* advertises itself. Thus *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is *cintāmaṇi-svarūpa, kṛṣṇa-svarūpa*

and *caitanya-rāsa-svarūpa*. Just by chanting Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, *kṛṣṇa-rasa* rises spontaneously in the core of the heart. *Nāma* is complete in itself. This means that it does not depend on the construction of *mantras*, such as *kṛṣṇāya* or *nārāyāṇāya*, which are formed by a combination of names. *Nāma* is always transcendental—not lifeless like material syllables. Only *nāma* is *caitanya-rasa*. *Nāma* is ever liberated. It cannot be produced by the material tongue. Only a person who has tasted the mellow of *nāma* can understand this explanation. One who imagines that *nāma* is lifeless is not eligible to relish *caitanya-rasa*, nor is he satisfied with this explanation.

A person may say that *nāma*, which we continuously chant, is dependent on material syllables, so how can it be said that *nāma* is eternally liberated and not a material object? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī responds to this adverse opinion as follows:

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇā-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu Eastern Division 2/109)

"The material senses can perceive a material object. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is transcendental, therefore, it can never be perceived by the material senses. The *nāma* that then manifests on the tongue is only a result of a *sphūṛti*—a pulsating of the transcendental senses of the soul. When devotees utter *kṛṣṇa-nāma* with this transcendental (*aprākṛta*) tongue, the *parama-tattva* appears on their material (*prākṛta*) tongues and begins to dance. Laughing as a result of bliss (*ānanda*), weeping and lamentating with affection (*sneha*) and dancing out of love (*prīti*) is how transcendental (*aprākṛta*) *rasa* pervades the senses. Similarly, the *rasa* of *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma* pervades the tongue."

The *nāma* practiced during *sādhana* is only *chaya nāma* (a shadow of *nāma*) or *nāmābhāsa* (chanting which is covered by clouds of ignorance and *anarthas*). It is not the real name. Continuous chanting of *nāmabāsa* will eventually develop into a taste

in *aprākṛta nāma*. Examples of this are evident in the lives of Vālmīki and Ajāmila.

The *jīva* has no taste in *nāma* because of his offences. When the *jīva* chants *kṛṣṇa-nāma* without offence, the *caitanya-rasa-vigraha* (the fully conscious reservior of all pleasure) transcendental *śrī hari-nāma* manifests Himself within his heart. At that time his heart becomes joyful, streams of tears flow from his eyes, and symptoms of *sāttvika* ecstasy appear in his body. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.3.24) thus states:

tad aśma-sāraṁ hṛdayaṁ vatedaṁ
yad gṛhyamāṇair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ
na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro
netre jalaṁ gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ

"When a *jīva* chants *hari-nāma*, the following symptoms manifest: he experiences a change of heart, tears flow from his eyes and his bodily hairs stand erect. It is to be understood that when, despite chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, a person does not experience any of these symptoms, his heart has become hard due to offences."

The primary duty of a *sādhaka* is to chant *hari-nāma* without offence. It is, therefore, necessary to know how many types of offences there are, and in this way one can save himself from committing them.

Śāstra refers to ten offences in relation to *hari-nāma*:

1. To blaspheme devotees and saintly persons.
2. To consider demigods like Lord Śiva to be equal to Bhagavān or independent of Him.
3. To disobey Śrī Guru, who reveals the truth about *hari-nāma*.
4. To criticise *sat-śāstra*, which describes the glories of *hari-nāma*.
5. To consider the glories of *hari-nāma* to be an exaggeration.
6. To consider the excellences and divine qualities of*hari-nāma*, as delineated in *śāstra*, to be imaginary.
7. To commit sinful activities on the strength of chanting *hari-nāma*.

8. To equate chanting of *hari-nāma* with materially auspicious activities recommended in the *karma-kaṇḍa* sections of the *Vedas*.
9. To instruct faithless persons on the glories of *hari-nāma*.
10. To not develop love for *kṛṣṇa-nāma* after knowing His glories because of attachments to the body and things related to the body.

1) A person commits an offence to *hari-nāma* if he disbelieves in the saintly *bhaktas* and blasphemes the *mahājanas*, whose characters are spotless. Thus, one who accepts *hari-nāma* must first reject with his whole heart the tendency to disrespect or disregard any Vaiṣṇava. If a doubt arises about the activity of a Vaiṣṇava, one should try to inquire about the cause of that behaviour and avoid criticising him. Our primary duty is to have faith (*śraddhā*) in the *sādhus*.

2) To consider demigods like Lord Śiva to be non-different from Bhagavān is *nāmāparādha*. *Bhagavat-tattva* is one without a second. Demigods like Lord Śiva are not independent of Śrī Bhagavān's authority, nor are they separate from Him. If a person honours demigods like Śiva as *guṇāvataras* or as *bhaktas* of Bhagavān, he will not form the misconception that they are independent of Him. Those who consider Mahādeva (Śivjī) an independent and separate demigod worshipping him alongside Viṣṇu, do not actually accept the elevated status of Mahādeva who himself is worshipping Viṣṇu. They therefore become offensive to both Viṣṇu and Śiva. Those who chant *hari-nāma* should reject this kind of misconception.

3) To disobey Śrī Gurudeva is *nāmāparādha*. He who gives the highest teachings of *nāma-tattva* should be accepted as *ācārya*, and as that person who is most dear to Bhagavān. One can attain firm faith in *hari-nāma* by cultivating staunch *bhakti* for Śrī Guru.

4) The bona fide *śāstras* should never be blasphemed. Revealed *śāstras* like the *Vedas* describe *bhagavata-dharma* and detail the importance of *śrī nāma*. Therefore, to blaspheme these *śāstras* is an

offence to the holy name. The glories of *hari-nāma* are described throughout the *Vedas.*

vede rāmāyāne caiva purańe bharate tathā
ādāvente ca madhya ca hariḥ sarvatra giyate

(C.c. *Ādi-līlā* 7.131)

"How can a person develop love for *hari-nāma* if he blasphemes bona fide *śāstras*? Some people consider the *śāstras*' descriptions of the importance of *hari-nāma* to be simply praise. It is *nāmāparādha* to chant *hari-nāma* with such an attitude, and those who do so will never achieve any tangible result. They conclude that *śāstra* falsely praises the glories of *hari-nāma*, as it falsely praises *karma-kaṇḍa* just so that people will develop a taste in it. Those who think like this are unfortunate. On the other hand, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.1.11) describes the faith of fortunate persons:

etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam
yogināṁ nṛpa nirṇītaṁ harer namānukīrtanam

"A *yogī* thinks that by obtaining detachment from the world, he can become free from all fear, and concludes that his wholesale duty is to chant *hari-nāma*. Persons who have such faith can achieve the result of *hari-nāma*."

5) Some people do not understand the difference between *nāmābhāsa* and *nāma*. They believe that *nāma* is only a combination of syllables that will definitely grant results whether one has faith or not. They use the life and character of Ajāmila as an example, as well as *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (6.2.14):

sāṅketyaṁ pārihāsyaṁ vā stobhaṁ helanam eva vā
vaikuṇṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haraṁ viduḥ

"One who chants *hari-nāma* is immediately freed from the reactions to unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly (to indicate something else), jokingly, for musical entertainment, or neglectfully. This is concluded by all the learned scholars of the *śāstras*."

6) Previously *hari-nāma* has been described as *caitanya-rasa-vigraha*, which cannot be perceived by the material senses. This proves that it is not possible to achieve the results of chanting when one commits *nāmāparādha*. He who chants without faith does not achieve the result of chanting; rather, within a few days he attains some faith in *nāma*. Faithless persons who believe that *nāma* is a limb of *karma kāṇḍa* propagate that *nāma* is only a material syllable and, therefore, equal to other names. They are actually conditioned souls and *nāmāparādhīs*. Vaiṣṇavas diligently endeavour to avoid this offence.

7) Some people believe that by taking shelter of *hari-nāma*, they have attained a cheap remedy for the results of all their sins. With this idea they think that they can steal, perform acts of fraud, act illicitly, and then chant *hari-nāma* to eradicate all their misdeeds. A person who believes this is certainly a *nāmāparādhī* (offender to *nāma*). One who has once tasted the transcendental mellows of *hari-nāma* will never again become attached to temporary material activities.

8) Some believe in pious activities (*karma*), such as performing *yajña*, giving in charity, behaving according to *dharma*, and visiting holy places. They also include the chanting of *nāma* as a pious activity, therefore, they are *nāmāparādhīs*. *Nāma* is always transcendental, whereas all pious activities are material. Anyone who considers *nāma* to be equivalent to pious activities becomes indifferent to *nāma* and cannot relish its mellows (*nāma-rasa*). There is a difference between diamonds and glass. Similarly, there is a vast difference between *hari-nāma* and pious activity.

9) One who instructs faithless persons about *hari-nāma* or gives them the *mantra* is also a *nāmapāradhi*. It is useless to give a string of pearls to a hog. The hog will simply regard it as an insult or completely disregard them. Similarly, it is extremely improper to give instruction on *nāma* to a faithless person. It is wise to first make an effort to develop his faith, and then instruct him on *hari-nāma*. Those who act as *guru* and give instructions on *hari-nāma* to faithless persons will definitely fall down—because they are committing *nāmāparādha*.

10) If a person does not have complete faith in *hari-nāma*, even after hearing its extensive glories, and if he is still attached to or dependent on *sādhanas* such as *karma*, *jñāna* or *yoga*, then he is a *nāmapāradhī*.

In this way, *hari-nāma* will not arise unless we avoid *nāmapāradha*.

Upon seeing the miseries of the *jīva*, the deliverer of Kali-yuga, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, instructs us with a compassionate heart:

tṛṇād api su-nīcena taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

(Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka: 3)

"By thinking oneself to be even lower than the straw in the street, being more tolerant than a tree, not accepting honour but giving honour to everyone, a *jīva* becomes eligible to chant *hari-nāma*."

The primary meaning of this *śloka* is that one is to chant *hari-nāma* with a pure attitude. One who considers himself insignificant never criticises *sādhus* nor disregards demigods like Lord Śiva. He differentiates, but with respect. He never disregards *guru*, blasphemes the bona fide *śāstras*, or doubts the glories of *hari-nāma*. He never combines false speculation with dry arguments to make the word 'Hari' equal with *nirguṇa brahma*, nor does he make offences on the strength of *nāma*. He does not accept pious activities to be on an equal level with *hari-nāma*. He never gives *hari-nāma* to faithless persons, and he doesn't have a scent of disbelief in *nāma*. He constantly endeavours to be aloof from the ten types of *nāmaparādha*. He never follows those who either ridicule or are inimical to *nāma*. Even though he works for the entire world, he does not possess any false ego of being the enjoyer or the doer. Thinking himself to be a servant of the world, he serves the whole world. The transcendental light of the spiritual world is situated in the core of his heart. When a qualified person chants *hari-nāma*, this light radiates, thus keeping the darkness of *māyā* far away from the *jīva*. Therefore, O *mahātmās*, constantly perform *hari-nāma kīrtana* without offence. There is no shelter for the *jīvas* other than *hari-nāma*.

Trying to save oneself from drowning in this ocean of material existence by taking shelter of *jñāna* and *karma* is as useless as taking shelter of a piece of straw to cross a great ocean. Therefore, accepting the shelter of the great ship of the *mahā-mantra*, cross this ocean of material existence.

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